

Moms, Don't Quit

Our family loves to play games. Some of our favorite times have come as we've played together, laughing and loving and being silly.

One particular night not long ago, we decided to play animal charades. It was Ellie's first turn, and she was crawling on all fours across the living room floor. Or maybe "crawling" isn't the right way to put it. This particular animal's gait seemed to be a cross between a polar bear's and a turtle's. I was puzzled. But Lindsey was certain she knew the answer.

"Cheetah!" she shouted.

"Nope," Ellie said.

"I quit," Lindsey said matter-of-factly.

"Already?" I said, at the same time my husband said, "But you only guessed once!"

"But I didn't get it right, so I quit," Lindsey repeated.

"Well, OK, I guess you can," I said.

Right then, Ellie began making squeaking noises, and somebody figured out she was a mouse.

"Good job," my husband said. "Kenny, you can go next, and Lindsey, you can just sit there and watch."

"I told you I quit," Lindsey said politely.

"You don't even want to watch?" we asked.

"Nope," Lindsey said. "I'm getting them all wrong. So I don't want to play."

I couldn't help but be amused. Maybe it was Lindsey's amiable tone of voice, the abruptness of her decision or some

combination of factors. Whatever the reason, I found the situation funny.

But sometimes quitting isn't funny at all. When someone quits something that really matters, it can be tragic. At the very least, the person involved will miss out on the blessing God had for her in that endeavor—and maybe cause others to miss out too. At the worst, quitting can cause a lifetime of suffering.

Yes, there are times when God clearly tells us to stop pursuing something. At those times, we must be obedient. But I'm talking about the times we should keep going and don't. Discouragement, fatigue and grief can all be powerful factors that make us want to quit. But if we listen to them when they are contrary to God's voice, we're making a big mistake—sometimes a huge mistake.

A mom can't get her child to behave, so she throws in the towel and stops trying. *I just can't do anything with him*, she reasons.

A wife doesn't have the kind of communication with her husband that she desires, so she gives up trying to talk to him at all, except to say things like, "Will you pick up some milk on your way home?"

A woman's life feels empty, so she turns her back on God. *If God really loved me, He'd be helping me out more than He is*, she believes.

At times, it seems impossible to keep going even one more step. There's just nothing more left in us. We're physically exhausted and emotionally weary, and hope is gone. But even then, when we're far past the limits of what we thought we could endure, we don't have to quit. There is a way to keep going. And it doesn't involve dredging up energy from somewhere to try just one more time.

It involves doing the same thing our children do when they're tired of walking: letting Someone else carry us.

We've all heard our children say, "Mommy, I'm tired. Will you carry me?" Sometimes we grant the request, and sometimes we don't. But our heavenly Father is always ready and willing to carry us. He'll never turn us down. Yes, He sometimes requires us to pass through the fire, but He doesn't require us to do it in our own strength. He offers us His strength, which is constantly present and infinitely great.

We don't have to make it through life in our own power. God is always ready to help us. He won't always remove the circumstances that make things difficult for us (though He might!), but He will always lend us His strength to get us through what He has ordained for us to go through.

When we can't take another step, He can. When we can't face another day, He can. When we don't know up from down or how to move on, He does.

We don't have to quit. He can keep us going, even when our strength is gone.

"For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone" (Deut. 32:36, ESV).

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is the author of *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy* and *Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure* (Regal Books). She is a stay-at-home mom with five children.*